

How To

"Motive"-ate

BY MARIENNE USZLER

Get a Sense of the Piece

- ◆ The student listens, *without* watching the music, while you perform Mm. 1-16. Then ask questions like the following:
How would you describe what the right hand does?
Is it a long, smooth line? Does it leap? Does it creep?
Does it go up, down, or both?
Did you ever get a sense that you knew what was coming next? Why?
Describe the right-hand pattern.
Is it a sigh? A jerk? A bump? A twist?

However the student answers these questions, lead the listening and responses to an understanding that the right hand moves up by step to a high point, then relaxes by falling back upon itself quickly.

[The questions offer choices to help the student find descriptive words, yet subtly hint at the idea of motive, sequence, and mood.]

- ◆ Have the student read the right hand, noticing how the fingering aids the physical gesture to gently emphasize each quarter note. In Mm. 7, 8 and 15, 16 the fingering is especially important. It helps to shape the phrases and to articulate the repeated note.

As the student plays the right hand, accompany with the left-hand part. That way there will be a model aural image.

Prepare the Left-hand Moves

The left hand must be ready to expand (for the octaves) and contract (for the thirds and seconds). Prepare the left-hand so that it, too, imitates the "sighing" right-hand motives.

Have the student play the left hand to develop the idea and the feel that it mimics, or answers, the right-hand "sighs."

Many students will now be able to try both hands together, at least enough to go home with a physical and musical sense of how to play these 16 measures.

Motive and Sequence

motive—a short musical pattern.

sequence—a musical pattern repeated on another pitch. A sequence may be higher or lower than the pattern.

Andante uses a 2-note motive that is sequenced up the keyboard.



Andante

Key of _____ major/minor (circle)

Johann Christian Bach*
(1735-1782, Germany)
original form

Andante (♩ = 88-100)

*J.C. Bach was one of the 23 children of the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach.

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If not, suggest a simple exercise like



so that the student can develop the correct physical feel and sound before playing the exact left-hand notes.

Get an Image of the Entire Piece

This time the student listens, *without* watching the music, while you play the entire piece. Once again, ask questions.

Are there clear sections to the piece? How would you describe these?

The middle section is completely different. In which ways? Does the middle section move up or down?

17 5 1 5 4 4 1 5 4

21 *p cresc.* *f* *mf*

26 *cresc.* *f*

31 *mf*

36 *cresc.* *f*



In your practice this week, make up a **motive** followed by 2 **sequences** each day.

Which part of the middle section is most active? Why?
What is the impression at the end of the middle section?
Is there a motive in this section?

Have the student prepare and play the left-hand in Mm. 17-24. The quicker-moving thirds in Mm. 21-24 may be a little "gummy." Ask the student to think of going from the eighth-note thirds to the thirds over the barline. Going from 1-3 to 2-4 is easier than going from 2-4 to 1-3.

Have the student prepare and play the right-hand in Mm. 17-24. It might be easier to begin with the third finger in M. 18 and Mm. 20-24.

Have the student play Mm. 21-24 hands together. Perhaps you will need to give special attention to the gesture from the last

eighth notes to the notes over the barline. Suggest that the student feels the hands going in contrary motion.

Words to Discuss

◆ Motive What does "motive" mean?

An inner drive. Something that causes action. Something that "drives" someone to do something.

Make analogies to how musical motives "drive" the musical action.

• Sequence What does "sequence" mean?

A continuous, related series. An orderly arrangement. A series. A chain. A musical sequence means a pattern repeated on other pitches. That's what makes it "orderly" and "predictable."

• Andante It comes from the Italian word "andare" (ahn-Dah-ray) which means to walk. Think of it as easy-going. Moving evenly. Without rush or bumps. III

"Motive"-ate Yourself!

Create a variation on Bach's Andante. Have the right-hand motive move up by steps, rather than down.



Create an original, but similar, Andante motive. Perhaps



OR



The Composer

Johann Christian Bach was the youngest of the "Bach boys." His family nickname was "Christel." After his father died, he lived with his older brother, Carl Philipp Emanuel, in Berlin. He then traveled to Italy, became a Catholic, and began writing operas. When he moved to London, he gave keyboard concerts, and one of these was the first performance of a solo work on the new "pianoforte." Mozart loved his music, and the two composers became friends.

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Level 3B, pp. 16, 17

How To

Focus on the Melody

BY SUZANNE W. GUY

About the Composer

Who was Stephen Heller? His circle of friends included Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin, yet today this Hungarian composer is often overlooked. He preferred the smaller lyric forms and is best known for his tone poems, even if they are titled Prelude or Etude.

About the Piece

Tolling Bell is one of the best tone poem examples from a collection of 24 Studies. Its 31 measures can be played at a walking pace in less than one minute. Yet even a short subject can be made shorter if you divide a whole into little pieces.

The bells are played by the left hand and are marked with tenuto signs. Ring every one of them! The lingering resonance comes from playing the "bells" with a paintbrush stroke. Drop firmly into the key, stroke gently and release, leading up with the wrist. This kind of progressive key contact makes the sound last longer. Be sure to play the melodic syncopation in measures 5-4 (and all similar places) with dynamic inflection. Look for the double stems to guide you toward the important notes.

Tolling Bell

Op. 125, No. 8

STEPHEN HELLER
(1813-1888)

Andante (♩ = 100-120)

The musical score for 'Tolling Bell' is presented in a standard piano format. It begins with a treble and bass clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 100-120 beats per minute. The score is divided into four systems. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the melody. The third system (measures 9-12) introduces a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth system (measures 13-16) concludes with a 'poco rall.' (slightly slowing down) marking. The left hand consistently plays single notes, often marked with tenuto lines, while the right hand plays more complex melodic lines with various articulations and dynamics.

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Overview

What is the form? Look for similarity and difference—a clue to the organization of any piece.

- ◆ Measures 1-8 (LH melody)
- ◆ Measures 9-16 (RH melody)
- ◆ Measures 17-24 (LH melody)
- ◆ Measures 25-31 (LH winds down, RH has the final say)
- ◆ The standard musical shorthand is ABA' Coda

Notice that every measure has mostly eighth notes, some of which are better and brighter than others under the same beam. (There is no democracy in music.)

How do you spot the most important notes?

- ◆ Look for stems going in both directions (double-stemmed notes).
- ◆ Give them a boost of tone quality—caress the key.
- ◆ The tenuto (—) mark above or below the note head requires a special sound. Pretend the keyboard is a cork board. Press (don't punch) the marked notes.

What You Need for Bell Sounds

- ◆ Left hand is the bell ringer for all the F# single notes. Make a rainbow shape to cross over the right hand in a gentle arc.

The musical score is for a piece in B minor, 3/4 time. It consists of 28 measures. The score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number in a box at the beginning: 16, 20, 24, and 28. The first system (measures 16-19) starts with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *f*, *fp*, and *p*. A half cadence occurs at measure 16. The second system (measures 20-23) continues the melody and bass line. The third system (measures 24-27) shows the final measures of the piece, ending with a perfect cadence. The fourth system (measures 28-29) shows the final measure of the piece. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings.

“All’s Well That Ends Well”

There are two endings in this short piece!

At the midpoint is a beautiful half cadence at measure 16.

A half cadence sounds unfinished, because it pauses on the dominant.

Think of it as a musical question mark.

The key is B Minor (tonic) and the pause is on an F# Major harmony.

There are more dynamic instructions in the last seven measures than anywhere else in the piece.

The *f* upbeat eighth notes in measure 28 lead to a surprise *p* that must still have enough punch before closing even softer in the final measure.

The final chord is “perfect” because of the tonic B in both the highest and lowest voice. Notice how restful the ending feels.

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- ◆ Right hand “rings” all the F# octaves. Let the fifth finger “shine” more than the thumb as you play and release into the rest to follow.
- ◆ Pedal by harmonic color, blending all the notes of the chord together. Notice the pedal marking holds for an entire measure.
- ◆ Listen to the shower of sounds with your ears open and eyes closed.

Focus on the Melody

Regardless of the dynamic marking, a melody rarely speaks below *mezzo forte*. If the accompaniment is soft enough, the melody will stand out and sing.

Practice balance like this:

1. PLAY the melody tone.
2. SHADOW the accompaniment note or chord.
Shadow means to touch the unimportant tones, moving the fingers on the keys, but without sound.
3. Combine PLAYING and SHADOWING.
4. SHADOW enough to MOVE the key(s) until sound emerges.
5. Adjust the balance until melody and accompaniment are three dynamic levels apart. III